

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Rm. 2, Saanich Municipal Hall
770 Vernon Avenue, Victoria BC, V8X 2W7
May 3, 2023, at 5:03 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mena Westhaver, Rae Franklin, Tracy Grimsrud, Stephan Herman, Laurie-Anne Keith, Donald Kennedy, Swapna Mazumder, Reed Poynter, Rachid Ouache (5:06 p.m.).

Staff: Deputy Chief Paul Douglas, Saanich Police; Sheila Allen, Director, Corporate Services; Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager Community Services (5:22 p.m.); Samuel Dubois, Human Resources Manager, People and Programs; Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Kam Judge and Maya Bosdet

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair read the Territorial Acknowledgment and welcomed committee members; the following was noted:

- Preference to meet in person. Hybrid to be an option for May meeting.
- Introductions of members and staff took place.

REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair reviewed Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) Advisory Committee Terms of Reference and the ADEI mandate was read out.

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION REPORT (DEI) UPDATE

The Senior Manager of Community Services provided an overview and update on the Development of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DEI). The following was noted:

- Recognition needs to be given to the generations that have come before us that have worked hard to bring light to this important topic.
- 5 years ago, a vision to revamp from a traditional Parks and Recreation Department to Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Department, specifically with a focus on underprivileged, marginalized, and vulnerable communities began.
- Formal work for a DEI plan/division had never existed in Saanich before so Council was asked to focus specifically on Indigenous nations, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and/or Questioning (LGBTQ+) in a more formalized way.

- Internal focus on Saanich's workforce, leadership, and training for organizational readiness was prioritized which would create an inclusive environment.
- DEI provided a report to partner with Corporate Services to focus on employees, policies, protocols and have legislature and PRCS focus on the community side.
- To have community groups, audience intercepts for the public, key interviews with stake holders and organizations to marginalize the voices that we don't always hear.

Following comments and questions from the members, the following was noted:

- Accessibility is only mentioned once in the report. Cognitive, physical, and health challenges were left out.
- The report is not inclusive to discrimination in all forms or genetic characteristics.
- The committee made a request for future presentations, to give an update on current community services that are offered.

CREATING AN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Director of Corporate Services and the Human Resources Manager presented on the Creating an Accessibility Plan, and the following was noted:

- There are deadlines and legislative requirements that require input from various platforms including the committee, public, staff, facilities etc. to capture what areas the municipality is succeeding in and what is needed to improve to move forward.
- To maximize time, a consultant has been secured for May 31st to assist and offer support with brainstorming and round table discussion.
- Staff is in contact with the Engineering Department to provide reports on what buildings need to be prioritized and which areas are completed.
- There is a new staff working group, with a representative from 14 departments, to assess which achievements to highlight, what is underway, and where improvement is required to achieve success within this plan.
- The legislative timeline is September 1, 2023, to have a broad framework, identifying some priorities and a sense of direction which will then create a 3-year plan.
- Accessibility is more than a legal compliance and Saanich wants to build an equitable and inclusive environment.
- Other resources concerning the Accessibility Plan are available from HR.
- Partnering with the Police Department to include them in community feedback is imperative to success.

Following questions and comments from the committee, the following was noted:

- The deadline for the Accessibility plan falls before the September committee meeting and this is concerning.
- The plan will be posted as a draft framework on the website to meet the legislative requirement, then work will begin to formally create a draft plan to bring to the committee and ultimately to Council.
- There will be opportunity for the public to offer feedback on the plan development through various avenues such as a public survey, open house and other options.
- There is not a clear plan for funding at this time.

S. Dubois and C. Paul exited the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

The meeting recessed at 6:03 p.m. and resumed at 6:12 p.m.

It was the consensus that the new meeting time will be changed to 5:00 p.m. and the June 7, 2023, meeting is re-scheduled for May 31, 2023.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

A committee round table took place, and the following was noted:

- A member would like to see supportive resources such as programs for accessibility challenges, to be always available.
- A registration process that is equitable for all families is needed.
- All decisions made within Saanich should have an accessibility focus, for example, crosswalk buttons placed in a safe manner for everyone to access.
- Horse manure on pathways and roads is an accessibility issue for people with physical challenges.
- Saanich staff displays positive inclusive engagement in public spaces to families of children with different disabilities.
Upgrades for road/sidewalk safety in Saanich is a priority. The Active Transportation Plan lays out future opportunities for Engineering and other staff. A presentation will be made at a future meeting.
- A possible idea would be to have a check list, that the committee will create, to offer to staff when development plans are underway, to specifically speak to accessibility challenges.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3, 2023.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 31st, 2023.

Councillor Westhaver, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Secretary